

**GRADUATE CERTIFICATE in
Consolidation of Social Work Practice
LEVEL 6 - 60 Credits
BMPF6044**

**LEARNER PORTFOLIO
(PORTH AGORED and UNIVERSITY OF
WALES TRINITY SAINT DAVID)**

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Cohort: 21 onwards

Task 1 Part a

Developmental review

Guidance:

Task 1 part a asks you to use a model of reflection to reflect on your past practice and future developmental needs. It should be completed by taking into account the work you have undertaken since qualifying. In discussions with your mentor and/or supervisor/line manager identify your future developmental needs as part of your First Three Years of Practice Individual Plan under each of the 3 learning outcomes below. You must meet the Learning Outcomes for this task (see appendix 4 of the handbook).

Please answer all elements of the question below.

Question:

Using a reflective model critically reflect on your professional development since qualifying as a social worker. Based on this and in discussion with your mentor/supervisor/line manager go on to identify and justify your future developmental needs over the coming 12 months under **each** of the 3 Social Care Wales (SCW) learning outcomes listed below providing at least one developmental need for each of the learning outcome below:

1. Applying analysis in assessment to inform interventions.
2. Working collaboratively with people in need of care and support, their carers and other professionals.
3. Intervention and application of professional judgement in increasingly complex situations.

This task must make reference to how the supervision, training, learning and research has and will inform your practice.

750 words (+/- 10%: include your actual word count at the end of each section).

To reflect upon my professional development since qualifying as a social worker, I will use Borton's Model of Reflection (1970). This reflective framework poses the questions 'what?', 'so what?', and 'now what?' to assist in clearly reflecting upon what I have accomplished, identifying what I would like develop, and evaluating how best to approach this.

Since qualifying as a social worker, I have had a role within the initial assessment team, meaning that it is my responsibility to identify, analyse and assess a family's care and support needs under Section 3 of the Social Services and Wellbeing Act (2014). Through discussions with my supervisor, I have identified that writing concise assessments has not come naturally

to me. Including unnecessary detail has meant that I have not always focused on the risks identified, which can affect the strength of my analysis. Milner et al (2015) highlight that the clarity of analysis will determine how successful the following intervention is, as it will provide the basis for focused and proportionate recommendations. When reflecting with my supervisor about how to go about this, I have decided that it will be important for me to read both comprehensive and simple assessments from my more experienced peers, to provide me with examples of analytical and concise writing. It may also be beneficial for me to bring an assessment of my own into supervision to gain oversight around how I can strengthen my assessment-writing. I also intend to attend training on the Signs of Safety Model (Turnell and Edwards, 1999; Turnell and Murphy, 2018), to increase my confidence in implementing the three-columned approach, which aims to explore the following lines of enquiry; 'what is working well', 'what are we worried about', and 'what do we need to see happen'. This training will enable me to practice using the three-columned approach to analyse risk, and I am hopeful that by practicing this method, I will be able to hone my analysis skills, and ensure that my recommendations are focused and relate directly to the concerns and strengths.

Working collaboratively with families and professionals is a crucial facet of social work. The Welsh Government has placed an emphasis upon working 'with' rather than 'unto' service users (Livingstone et al, 2023), to ensure that collaborative working is a priority. In their theory of Motivational Interviewing, Miller and Rollnick (2013) posit that individuals are more likely to make positive changes when they feel empathised with and understood. However, it can be difficult to work collaboratively with families where parents are challenging, confrontational or even abusive. Over the coming 12 months, I plan to improve my collaborative working with challenging families by considering in supervision how I can communicate my views sensitively but assertively, and to unpick what has worked well for me in the past and where I have come across barriers. I plan to attend the Working with Hostile Families workshop to deepen my understanding around why individuals might demonstrate hostility and aggression towards professionals, and what tools I can use to deescalate tensions and conflict. In addition, I also plan to attend training on Resilience, with aims to develop my own personal confidence in order to withstand challenging situations and remain calm and reasonable in my work with families. I will ensure that I utilise supervision to monitor my progress and seek oversight if there are any issues.

Finishing my year as a newly qualified social worker has meant that I am now able to carry investigations under Section 47 of the Children Act (1989). This often means walking into unknown situations, and dealing with heightened children and adults. An ability to quickly analyse risk and make decisions based on this to safeguard children is imperative. Thus far, I have lacked confidence in my own professional judgement and have relied on the police officer present to take charge. However, I recognise that social services input is a crucial component to these investigations, and I therefore hope to grow in confidence by doing the following. Firstly, I plan to shadow my more experienced colleagues to enable me to learn through observation and reflect on my own practice. I also intend to complete an Achieving Best Evidence Refresher course which provides training on the Section 47 investigation itself and the taking of the Witness Interview Booklet, to enable me to stay up to date with procedures and best practice. As professional curiosity is a key element of applying professional judgement in complex situations, I plan to attend a Professional Curiosity course, to help me to recognise and investigate concerns, and to keep an open mind. I will also utilise supervision to explore my own biases and prejudices which might impact upon my professional judgement.

Word count: 784

Task 1
Part b
Developmental Review

Guidance:

Task 1 part b is a 2-part question and a continuation of task 1 part a and you **must** refer to a reflective model in this task.

Please ensure that you meet the required learning outcomes for this task (See appendix 4 of the handbook) and that you answer both parts of the question.

Please answer all elements of the question below.

Question

Use a reflective model to critically reflect on the learning needs you identified in task 1 part a under each of the 3 SCW learning outcomes.

This must include reference to training, learning, research and supervision and reflection with your mentor/supervisor/line manager on the extent to which your learning outcomes has been achieved.

Identify your learning needs to support your development in the transition to becoming an experienced practitioner in your future career following the completion of this programme.

650 words (+/- 10%: include your actual word count at the end of each section).

Around 12 months ago, I used Borton's reflective model (1970) to identify learning and developmental needs that I wanted to focus on over the coming year. Reflecting on learning needs is an 'integral' part of continuing professional development as a social worker, as it can encourage 'more thoughtful and ethically grounded interventions' (Ravalier and Allen, 2020).

One of the areas I wanted to develop was writing clear and concise assessments with stronger analyses. I feel that I have accomplished this. Within the last year, management have collated a folder containing examples of good practice of all of the reports and assessments that we complete within the team. I have spent time reading through these examples and making notes of areas I can strengthen within my own reports. I have also attended a two-day training on Signs of Safety, which has assisted me in being clear about what the worries are- including evidence of significant harm and complicating factors- what the strengths and safety are, and what our goals and recommendations for next steps are. I have found that through utilising the Signs of Safety approach, my analyses have become stronger as they are grounded in evidence. I have also sought oversight from my supervisor about my own assessments, and have taken on board areas to improve. I feel that the quality of my assessments has increased in the last year as a result.

Borton's reflective model also assisted me in identifying a need to improve my collaborative working when I am met with hostility or uncooperativeness from families. I feel that I have made significant progress in this area, as I have had the opportunity to work with many families who have exhibited a range of challenging behaviours in the last year. My confidence has grown with practice and experience, and I have found it easier to challenge parents and be clear about my concerns. I have attended training on Motivational Interviewing, and have found that taking this approach with hostile parents has helped them to feel that I am working with rather than against them (Livingstone et al, 2023), which has improved relationships and reduced hostility. I have also attended training specific for working with hostile families to explore why families can be resistant and hostile, and to explore possible strategies and methods to engage challenging families. I have discussed the principle in supervision, and sought advice from my colleagues when I have been faced with difficult families. However, I acknowledge that this is still an area of practice I would like to continue focusing on, and I intend to continue utilising supervision to continue monitoring my progress in this area.

Finally, I also wanted to increase my confidence in my own professional judgement in complex situations. Whilst this continues to be an area which can be challenging, I feel that I have had success and seen an improvement in my own confidence and decision making. I have now been regularly completing Section 47 investigations for a year, where I have had to make quick decisions to respond to the safeguarding concerns based on information which is often limited. However, I have found that as my confidence and experience has increased, I have found it easier to share my views alongside the police offer. Whilst I was not able to attend an Achieving Best Evidence refresher course as I had planned, I have utilised supervision to reflect on Section 47 investigations, in terms of what went well and what could have been done differently. I have also utilised the good practice folder to read examples of Section 47 reports from my peers to incorporate the positives into my own practice.

Overall, I am pleased with the progress I have made this year in the learning outcomes I had previously identified. I feel that utilising the support and oversight from my supervisor and other colleagues has enabled me to make positive progress in recent months. However, I would like to further develop my court skills. Being in the initial assessment team has meant that I rarely have had the opportunity to be in court. This is an area I feel I would best be able to develop in one of the longer term teams in the Local Authority.

Word count: 708

Question

Reflect on feedback that you have received from individuals in need of care and support and/or their carers and explain how this information has helped shape your practice and future professional development.

100 words (+/- 10%: include your actual word count at the end of each section).

Total task 1 part b 750 words (+/- 10%: include your actual word count at the end of each section).

Regular reflection and critical evaluation is crucial to a social worker's continual development (BASW, 2021). Central to my reflective practice has been the feedback I have received from service users.

As evidenced in task 2, the mother (1) described me in her feedback as well-prepared, helpful, and a good listener. She remarked that I made her feel comfortable despite having been anxious about social services' involvement. Hearing that I held these views, particularly when we were in a Child Protection arena, helped me to understand that person-centred practice is vital to collaborative working, as individuals are more likely to change for the better if they feel listened to and understood.

Word count: 110